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Introduction to American Education

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Savage Inequalities

1. Chapter One pg. 3

“Moreover, in most cities, influential people that I met showed little inclination to address this matter and were sometimes even puzzled when I brought it up. Many people seemed to view this segregation issue as “ a past injustice” that had been sufficiently addressed. Others took it as an unresolved injustice that no longer held sufficient national attention to be with contesting. In all cases, I was given the distinct impression that my inquiries about this matter were not welcome.”

-I felt this passage was important because it shows how even the most important people within these burnt out cities are divided among the injustice that has been brought before them. I think it’s important because that author emphasizes so much on how these people need change and better life but I feel that these people are the first step to change and they’re preventing it themselves by not discussing segregation as a problem.

1. Chapter Two pg. 42

“According to the 1980 census, 58 percent of men and women 17 and older in North Lawndale had no jobs. The 1990 census is expected to show no improvement between 1960 and 1970, as the last white families left the neighborhood, North Lawndale lost three quarter of its jobs. In the next ten years, 80 percent of the remaining jobs in manufacturing were lost.”

“People carry a lot of crosses here,” says Reverend Jim Wolff, who directs a mission church not far from one of the deserted factories. “God’s beautiful people live here in the midst of hell.”

-Even in the worst conditional people still have unconditional faith, which will eventually produce good karma.

1. Chapter Three pg. 83

“In a country where there is no distinction of class,” Lord Acton wrote of the United States 130 years ago, “a child is not born to the station of its parents, but with an indefinite claim to all the prizes that can be won by thought and labor. It is conformity with the theory of equality…to give as near as possible to every youth an equal state in life.’ Americans, he said, “are unwilling that any should be deprived in childhood of the means of competition.”

-This passage is important because it displays the ideal image of a child’s education and success but the book provides evidence that proves this thought to be inaccurate within America.

1. Chapter Four pg. 142

“President Bush,” says Ruthie Green-Brown, principal of Camden High, when we meet later in her office, “speaks of his ‘goals’ and these sound very fine. He mentions preschool education-early childhood. Where is the money? We have children coming to kindergarten or first grade who are starting out three years delayed in their development. They have had no preschool. Only a minimal number of our kids have had a chance at Head Start. This is the most significant thing that you can do to help an urban child if your goal is to include that urban child in America. Do we want that child to be included?

-This passage is important because the principal asks rhetorical questions which are crucial to education but that will never be answered because politicians can only focus on so much problems and an urban child’s education is not on the list of priorities in their eyes.

1. Chapter Five pg. 176

“The equalized 75 percent,” says an educator in one of the state’s low-income districts, “buys just enough to keep all ships afloat. The unequal 25 percent assures that they will sail in opposite directions.”

-This is one of my favorite passages in the book because it summarizes the issue. 75 percent equality allows everyone to stay afloat and the 25 percent inequality allows the boats to sail in different directions. By keeping everyone afloat, you are just getting people by. They are just sitting there, not living their lives and not failing either but by sailing them in different directions, you allow some people to reach success and others to fail which in retrospect, this is how every system has become.

1. Chapter Six pg. 207

“If Americans had to discriminate directly against other people’s children, I believe most citizens would find this morally abhorrent. Denial, in an active sense, of other people’s children is, however, rarely necessary in this nation. Inequality is mediated for us by a taxing system that most people do not fully understand and seldom scrutinize. How this system really works, and how it came into existence, may enable us to better understand the difficulties that will be confronted in attempting to revise it.”

-Most people disagree with discrimination and this passage summarizes how indirectly people are supporting it because of the tax system. I think the history and the usage of the tax system should be explained to people because it will allow a scope of what their money is used for and promotes.

Questions

1. Has the quality of these children’s education increased since this book was published?
2. Did the author exaggerate to catch people’s attention?
3. Are there organizations created to help these children?
4. Would the situation change if people actually knew what was happening?
5. Are urban schools in American permanently prevented from achieving a better education?
6. Why has nothing been done nationally to create a better environment educationally, socially and economically for these children?